

-2-

IN THE CLAIMS

Amended claims follow:

1. (Previously Amended) A method for recognizing virus signatures, comprising
 - (a) identifying a list of virus signatures;
 - (b) combining the list of virus signatures into a tree of virus signatures; and
 - (c) comparing data against the tree of virus signatures for virus signature recognition;wherein the virus signatures each include a sequence of characters;
wherein the tree includes a plurality of branches each including a sequence of characters;
wherein a portion of the branches corresponds to a plurality of the virus signatures;
wherein the efficiency of the virus signature recognition is improved by reducing an amount of virus signature data that is compared against the data;
wherein the branches include further sub-branches each corresponding to at least one virus signature;
wherein the branches include upper branch portions and lower branch portions.
- 2.-6. (Cancelled)
7. (Previously Amended) The method as recited in claim 1, wherein the characters include wildcards.
8. (Previously Amended) The method as recited in claim 1, wherein the characters of the tree of virus signatures are obfuscated to prevent detection by the comparison.